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AUTHOR Shears, Nicholas C.
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ABSTRACT

"Glasnost" or openness, to many Western observers, is a sign of democratization and a loosening of central control in almost all aspects of Soviet life. However, an analysis of excerpts from "Pravda" shows no evidence of any breaks with Leninist theory or revision in the roles of the government and masses and instead suggests that "glasnost" fosters criticism of mid-level officials but preserves the autonomy of top party leaders, and their control of the press. One reason for "glasnost's" apparent failure to permit broader popular criticism is that such dissent and use of the press are heretical to Leninist theory, and Lenin's decrees on the use of the press in political socialization have been dutifully heeded. The document states that the success of such socialization, and Lenin's contempt for the competence of the masses, militates against a loosening of central control. Yet it is precisely decentralization and "glasnost" that are essential to Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts to invigorate Soviet economic and political life. Gorbachev has said that with no political opposition in the Soviet regime, "glasnost" must function as the monitor of government. It is held that the main problem is opposition from within the party, and this problem cannot be overstated, given the Soviet political elite's tradition of rule by consensus. (Forty-three notes are included, and 35 references are appended.) (MS)

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POLITICAL CRITICISM AND THE MEDIA IN THE AGE OF GLASNOST

By

Nicholas C. Shears

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Chapel Hill, NC

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To many Western observers, *glasnost* is a sign of democratization and a loosening of central control in almost all aspects of Soviet life. One observer, for instance, finds evidence of such democratization in a *Pravda* article about a corrupt party official, which connected *glasnost* with *kontrol* from below over the performance of officials and over bureaucratism and indifference.[1]

Such increased control from below, if extensive, would redefine the roles of Soviet officials and ordinary citizens, and would be an abrupt reversal in Leninist theory on criticism, the role of the press and the ideological competence of the masses.

The following analysis, based on excerpts from *Pravda*, finds no evidence of any such far-reaching break with Leninist theory or revision in the roles of the Soviet and masses. These excerpts suggest that *glasnost* fosters criticism of mid-level officials but preserves the autonomy of top party leaders, and their control of the press.

LENINIST THEORY ON CRITICISM AND THE ROLE OF THE PRESS

One reason for *glasnost's* apparent failure to permit broader popular criticism is that such dissent and use of the press are heretical to Leninist theory. Lenin wrote: "He who does not deliberately close his eyes cannot fail to see that the new 'critical' trend in socialism is nothing more than a new variety of opportunism. . . .It will be clear that 'freedom of criticism'

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[1] Remington, Thomas F. *Gorbachev and the Strategy of Glasnost*. Atlanta: Emory University, 1987: 7.

means freedom for an opportunist trend in Social-Democracy, freedom to convert Social-Democracy into a democratic party of reform, freedom to introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into socialism."[2]

This disdain for dissent was directed against criticism by fellow revolutionary elites. Lenin is yet more adamant in opposing criticism from ordinary workers, whom he considered incapable of contributing to socialist theory, or even of attaining revolutionary consciousness, without instruction from trained propagandists.[3]

Moreover, Lenin complained that even after instruction, workers could not grasp Marxism without a lowering of its theoretical level.[4] As a result, it seems clear that on both ideological and practical grounds, Lenin would have rejected as pointless, or even dangerous, any *glasnost*-like effort to encourage workers' dissent and involve them in policymaking.

Obviously, Lenin would also have opposed yielding use of the press for such purposes. He argued that the press should be an agent of political education, conveying party directives to the masses, not vice versa. He wrote that: "A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organizer."[5] Emphasizing the need for a single voice in such matters, he added: "The whole point is that there is no

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[2] Lenin, V.I. *What is to be Done?* New York: New World Paperbacks, 1973. p. 11.

[3] Tucker, Robert C. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972: p. xxviii.

[4] Lenin, p. 25.

[5] Lenin, p. 160.

other way of training strong political organizations except through the medium of an All-Russian newspaper."[6]

Lenin's decrees on the use of the press in political socialization have been dutifully heeded. A U.S. journalist in 1970, for instance, found: "The Soviet mass media are the carriers of values, beliefs, and ideals. The press conveys to the general public what is considered correct behavior and morality. . . .The Soviet press serves to 'socialize,' to inculcate and perpetuate a particular set of values."[7]

Similarly, in 1984, New York Times journalist Hedrick Smith described a conversation with the editor of *Pravda*'s Information Department, Mrs. Kirilova, who repeatedly characterized her journalistic mission with the Russian word *vospitanie*, which Russians ordinarily use in discussing the upbringing of children. Smith wrote: "At first I was startled by her use of the word, but as I thought about it, upbringing began to make sense. Soviet children begin to hear propaganda slogans before they can feed themselves."[8]

Smith also related a story told to him by a Lithuanian woman that reveals the impact of such early indoctrination:

> She told me about a friend who came to work one day in a bad mood. "'What's the matter?' I asked her. 'Oh it's my son, he's full of all that Lenin stuff they feed him in kindergarten -- Grandpa Lenin, everybody's protector, all that stuff. He came home

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[6] Lenin, p. 157.

[7] Hopkins, Mark. *Mass Media in the Soviet Union.* New York: Pegasus Press, 1970. p. 40.

[8] Smith, Hedrick. *The Russians.* New York: Washington Square Books, 1984: p. 263.

> yesterday and said, "Grandpa Lenin gives us everything," and I got angry with him. "Stupidity!" I said. "No Lenin gives you anything. Your father and I are the ones who give you everything. I stood in line for two hours yesterday to get you those boots, and don't you forget it!'"[9]

GLASNOST

Clearly the success of such socialization, and Lenin's contempt for the competence of the masses, militates against a loosening of central control. Yet it is precisely decentralization and *glasnost*, or openness, that are essential to Gorbachev's efforts to invigorate Soviet economic and political life. As Gorbachev has said, absent a political opposition in the Soviet regime, *glasnost* must function as the monitor of government.[10]

Such monitoring and economic restructuring are desperately needed. The Soviet Union has borrowed $6 billion from Western banks in the last two years to cover shortfalls in hard currency caused by the weak dollar and declining world oil prices, according to a recent CIA report.[11] In addition, the Soviet Union reportedly has a net debt of $23.2 billion and has been forced to triple its gold sales on the world market, from 100 tons a year in 1984 to over 300 tons a year in 1986.

Despite the regime's recognition of these problems and the hype about restructuring, *glasnost* has initially been implemented only on a limited scale. Thus far, mid-level party officials are

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[9] Smith, p. 263.

[10] Remington, p. 2.

[11] "Studies say Soviet economic woes spur heavy borrowing from West." *The News and Observer* 3 December 1987: 13a.

the overwhelming choice as targets of reform. It is among their ranks, not at the top, that the media initially have been aggressively exposing inefficiency, careerism, corruption and other presumed causes of stagnation.

Offering up the mid-level ranks for criticism of course makes eminent sense to the party elite. Doing so serves to placate the masses by allowing them to assail their regional leaders in print. In addition, this criticism aids the elites by eroding the mid-level cadres' power base and forcing them to accept greater accountability.

Ultimately, however, this criticism of the mid-level ranks, though politically expedient, will not in itself bring about the economic improvements expected of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. For restructuring to work, the top party elites and the masses must play their part as well. For instance, the elites must suffer the elimination of lucrative jobs in redundant ministries, and the masses must accept the carrot-and-stick packages of incentives coupled with increased prices and work requirements. In other words, a little *glasnost* is not enough.

CHANGING ROLE OF THE PRESS UNDER *GLASNOST*

In the expanding scope of glasnost, then, the press can turn its criticism against stagnation at either end of the political-economic spectrum. This section examines which direction *Pravda's* criticism is taking. It concludes, perhaps not surprisingly, that *glasnost* fosters criticism and control from above much more than from below.

Criticism from Below

In the West, the participatory nature of *glasnost* and *perestroika* is often depicted as having originated with Gorbachev. However, other socialist theorists have long recognized the need for openness and mass participation in economic decision making.

Milovan Djilas did so already in 1957. He wrote that, despite good intentions, central planning inevitably leads to "wastefulness of fantastic proportions" because no single group could possibly administer a complex modern economy rife with "contradictory internal and external tendencies." He wrote: "The absence of any type of criticism, even of any type of important suggestion, inevitably leads to waste and stagnation."[12]

Further, the failure to involve workers in criticism and economic decision making leads to the greatest waste of all, he suggested. He wrote: "The greatest waste is not even visible. This is the waste of manpower. The slow, unproductive work of disinterested millions, along with the prevention of all work not considered 'socialist,' is the calculable, invisible, and gigantic waste that no Communist has been able to avoid.[13]

Readings from *Pravda* offer evidence that workers, under *glasnost*, may call for increased participation but the few resulting reforms are yet to rouse the "unproductive.

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[12] Milovan Djilas. *The New Class*. New York: Hold, Rinehart and Winston, 1957. p. 118.
[13] Ibid. p. 120.

disinterested millions." As one worker complained in a letter to *Pravda*:

> We often and loudly repeat: the worker is the master of the construction site. But in actual fact, at least if you're talking about our trust, he's just an executor. Take personnel reassignments. Bosses are selected and removed, but no one ever asks our opinion about them. In spite of the fact that the workers know the key personnel and who's capable of what better than anyone else.[14]

The author concludes that real openness should help put an end to the "wanton practice of shifting leaders who have made mistakes from one position to another."

On February 13, a week after this letter appeared, *Pravda* printed a yet more sweeping indictment of mid-level party officials. The item, the now-famous "cleansing" article, quoted a reader's opinion that "an inert, ponderous party-bureaucratic stratum" stood between the Central Committee and the people. The reader charged that some people who hold party cards had ceased to be communists and wanted privileges without giving the people their energies or their knowledge.[15]

Also, with repeated attacks on "stiflers of criticism," *Pravda* has made it clear that officials must be receptive to such criticism. Citing the importance of ensuring that criticism yield "high results," a March *Pravda* article insisted: "The correct behavior is for province, city or regional party committees to take note of most important critical articles, monitor the measures taken, and reprimand those who do not react

[14] "I Fear Idle Talk." *Pravda* 4 Feb. 1987: 2.
[15] Remington, p. 7.

to criticism in a businesslike way." Only then, it said, would the press gain the necessary attention and respect.[16]

Worse than ignoring criticism, *Pravda* says, are officials' attempts to punish critical reporters. An early "dressing down" about reprisals, which appeared in May 1986, drew moderate self-criticism from the offending officials. A letter from the Uralsk Province Party Committee acknowledged that it was fair criticism that the party committee was "sternly warned about the impermissibility of suppressing criticism, persecuting journalists, and excessively interfering with the activities of newspaper, television, and radio editorial staffs."[17]

Pravda has since markedly stepped up the tone of its attacks on "stiflers of criticism." For instance, in August 1986, *Pravda* denounced a regional party secretary, an A. Mrykhin, for harassing a reporter who criticized cadre placement and education in the region.

"How did Mrykhin behave?" *Pravda* asks. "Did he reconsider what he was wrong about? Nothing of the kind. He began to seek revenge on the reporter." *Pravda* discovered that Mrykhin rushed to prepare a dossier on the hapless reporter, accusing him of drunkenness, indiscretion, incompetency and several lesser offenses. Of these, the reporter apparently was guilty only of illegally receiving a car battery at an agricultural equipment and supply outlet.

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[16] "Criticism in the Press." *Pravda* 9 March 1987: 1.
[17] "A Dressing Down." *Pravda* 5 Aug. 1986: 3.

Mrykhin protested: "Before a conference, one ought to write about achievements, and report on good things. . . That is what I thought, especially at the time." He said he feared that acknowledging shortcomings would persuade party leaders that he was incompetent. However, *Pravda* dismissed this explanation, saying that party leaders prefer honest self-criticism to false claims of achievement: "They'll say something else: a great bunch of guys at the regional party committee. They stirred people up and they're doing a great job of encouraging openness."[18]

Pravda went on to praise the reporter for continuing to write critical stories despite Mrykhin's opposition. *Pravda* said the reporter correctly realized that a party reporter has to fight for principle "and no longer has the right to look for peace and quiet."[19]

This requirement, that the regional party press criticize official wrongdoing, was made explicit in the "Program of Work for the Press," adopted in 1987 during the Central Committee's January Plenary Session. The Central Committee held that some newspapers have "outdated views" and do not give appropriate evaluation of "loafers, profit-seekers, and those who would like to give society as little as possible and take as much as possible from it." The problem, the statement said, was particularly bad in the city and regional press, "where

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[18] "An Unwelcome Reporter." *Pravda* 25 Aug. 1986: 3.
[19] Ibid.

tendencies for playing it safe and getting various types of approval before publishing materials is still strong."[20]

Criticism from Above

Gorbachev has emphasized that the masses must not play it safe either, for they too must commit themselves to *glasnost* and *perestroika*, restructuring. Speaking at a Komsomol congress in February 1987, Gorbachev said:

> The progress and opening up of enormous opportunities for human development and the realization of human creative capabilities has fallen to the lot of the present generation. As I have already said, we are approaching this endeavor by means of restructuring. This process is unfolding along the entire front and embracing all spheres of life in Soviet society. It needs the active participation of all workers in the country, including the working class, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, men, women, and veterans.[21]

Despite such rhetoric, other top leaders see a quite different function for *glasnost* and *perestroika*. They do not repeat this hope of "enormous opportunity for human development." Rather, they see *glasnost* as a means of extending party control deeper into the ranks of local officials and workers.

Specifically, the believe workers' participation in *perestroika* should consist simply of harder work, a renewed commitment to "Stakhanovite" feats of effort. Accordingly, workers' criticisms should expose their peers' failings and those

[20] "Program of Work for the Press." *Pravda* 21 Feb. 1987: 1.
[21] "Visit to Estonia: Speech by M.S. Gorbachov at the Komsomol Congress." *Pravda* 21 Feb. 1987: 1.

of their immediate superiors; their input is useless in setting policy and solving systemic problems.

Gorbachev has tried to discourage this view of *glasnost*. At the January 1987 Central Committee Plenum by asserting that "kontrol" from below was more important than "kontrol" from above.[22] Nevertheless, Remington notes that for conservative "centralizers" in the top party ranks, the intended role of *glasnost* "lies in strengthening of the transparency of lower levels to higher for control purposes."[23]

A leading supporter of using *glasnost* for this purpose is Egor Ligachev, the secretary for ideology, who has repeatedly urged that *glasnost* raise the level of discipline in society. Mindful of this view, Gorbachev himself has often warned that the media should be "responsible" in their criticism.

However, there is considerable evidence that such warnings are unnecessary, as the media continue solidly to favor the central party against the lower, regional ranks, not vice-versa. For instance, a *Pravda* article reads: "In party committees today, one often hears that 'the newspapers are our helpers and journalists are part of the party apparatus.' True words!" *Pravda* insisted that such statements should not be merely a sign of the times, but a reflection of a "genuine attitude towards journalists and newspapers."[24]

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[22] Remington, p. 24.
[23] Ibid. 23.
[24] "What is in the Mirror?" *Pravda* 18 July 1986: 2.

There are many other examples to show that the central party will bring the local press to heel for reporting it deems unacceptable. A March *Pravda* article, for instance, warns that while "topicality" is important for effective criticism, it is not the only condition.

Instead, *Pravda* said, "truthfulness, validity, and forcefulness are also very important." It warned that criticism, particularly from the press, "is an extremely responsible undertaking. Generalization and approximation, distortion of facts, and other deviations from the truth cannot be tolerated."[25]

Pravda insisted: "We must not pursue sensations and 'hot stories.' Accuracy and correspondence to life are unshakable Leninist rules for our journalism."[26]

Similarly, in February *Pravda* warned: "Non-acceptance of criticism is inadmissible. But the party expects, and this was noted in the report at the Plenary Session, that criticism in the mass media will continue to be characterized by profundity and impartiality as well as a high degree of civic responsibility."[27]

The media's continued, unshaken allegiance to the central party structure weakens the value of *glasnost* for workers and rank-and-file party members for two reasons. First, it establishes limits of *glasnost*, preventing the airing of criticisms on subjects central authorities deem off-limits.

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[25] "Criticism in the Press." *Pravda* 9 March 1987: 1.
[26] Ibid.
[27] "Program of Work for the Press." *Pravda* 21 Feb. 1987: 1.

Second, it threatens workers' social and economic security by subjecting them to increased scrutiny at work and in their political life.

Limits of *glasnost*

Despite the remarkable openness achieved by *glasnost*, many topics are still off-limits, and some of Gorbachev's conservative opponents insist *glasnost* has already gone too far. How easily conservatives can mount a backlash against *glasnost* was reflected in a *Pravda* article, and responses to it, that appeared during Gorbachev's vacation this past summer. Remington said the article, which drew many highly favorable responses, "appealed passionately for uncritical love of the Motherland, and condemned those who would discredit her past."[28]

Similarly, in March, Ligachev had hoped to quell criticism even of distant Soviet history: "Why is it so important to secure truly full and impressive propaganda of the achievement of Soviet power? Is there any slowdown here of criticism, *glasnost*: is there a departure from the appeals to appraise our history objectively and courageously? No. We are for an honest and open look back, but we are decidedly against falsification of our glorious past, against portrayals of our history as a chain of constant mistakes and disappointments. Perestroika is construction [sozidanie], and not negation."[29]

In the face of such opposition to *glasnost*, Gorbachev suffered a serious setback in early November, when criticized by

[28] Remington, p. 26.
[29] Ibid, p. 25.

Moscow Party Secretary Boris Yeltsin, one of his closest allies on *glasnost* policy. Yeltsin, who had been uncompromising in his support of *glasnost*, was ousted after accusing Gorbachev of cultivating a personality cult and of proceeding too slowly with *glasnost* and *perestroika*.

Conflicts of this kind cause uncertainty about the official line on *glasnost*, and undoubtedly have a chilling effect on ordinary workers, who may already be skeptical about the wisdom or effectiveness of joining the "critical voices." However, even if Gorbachev and his allies win out in the debate over *glasnost*, it would still seem unlikely that the average workers' concerns would be addressed with candor.

The nationality problem is a good example of an issue important to many ordinary Soviets but dealt with inadequately in the press, despite *glasnost*. The Soviet Union's non-Russian citizens, now a majority of the population, still are forbidden to express their demands for increased freedom of nationalist and ethnic expression.

For instance, in a long "Party Life" article, *Pravda* denounced the Kazakhstan press for taking a "formalistic" attitude toward internationalist education and not "giving their pages to workers, collective farmers, literary and artistic figures, or party, Soviet, and economic leaders very often . . . .instead of showing specific people in specific circumstances, the newspapers and magazines often limit themselves to chanting

patriotic slogans and exuberantly reporting on the successes of the republic and the provinces."[30]

Pravda also attacked Kazakhstan newspapers for praising a decision to teach in the Kazakh language in day-care centers, and for editorializing: "The strength of the people is the strength of the language. We must turn the national language into one of the most oratorical, grammatical, and rich languages."

These criticisms followed by only 10 days the Central Committee's "Program for Work of the Press," which called for the media to serve as as "an important instrument in developing democracy in economic matters, in politics and in the party itself," and to "concentrate its attention on people's spiritual world, on the human factor..."[31]

From such examples it seems clear that there is a double standard -- that openness in social issues does not warrant the same priority as openness in economic issues and anti-bureaucratism, which lead to increased output. As the first secretary of the Rostov provincial party noted: "It goes without saying that all our work in expanding *glasnost*, improving informedness, is not an end in itself. In the last analysis it should actively contribute to the accomplishment of tasks set by the Twenty-seventh Party Congress, the June 1986 Central Committee Plenum, and develop the initiative of labor

[30] "The Price of Conceit." *Pravda* 21 Feb. 1987: 2.
[31] "Program of Work for the Press." *Pravda* 21 Feb. 1987: 1.

collectives, rousing in people the aspiration to achieve higher results."[32]

Even for Soviet workers intent on using *glasnost* solely for this more limited purpose -- of furthering economic restructuring -- it is not clear that real openness is allowed. The problem is that criticism is more readily permitted of policies and leaders of the past than of the present. Remington writes: "So far, much of the support for *glasnost* among regional executives derives from the common interest among most members of Gorbachev's coalition in discrediting Brezhnev-era policies and cadres. Media disclosures of social stagnation and bureaucratic deformations still mainly implicate previous regimes. With time, this may change, and negative publicity may increasingly reflect on the performance of officials appointed under Gorbachev."[33]

Scrutiny of the Individual

In the meantime, ordinary workers are faced with another problem, that of *glasnost* increasing media and central-party criticism of their economic lives. Traditionally, the regional media's subservience to local party cadres insulated workers from such scrutiny. Local newspapers issued broad appeals for increased production, but there was little risk that individual workers or brigades would be exposed for absenteeism, pilfering and other minor transgressions.

Glasnost is changing this. In September, for instance, the *Volga Communist* received criticism for its vague, stereotyped

[32] Remington, p. 23.
[33] Ibid. p. 28.

recommendations. *Pravda* said: "The substitution of general appeals for serious analysis weakens the newspaper's contents. Even the names of bad workers proclaimed throughout the whole country do not receive constant, intent attention from local journalists. One of these names is that of the Ekran (Screen) Association, well known for the poor quality of its Cascade television sets."[34]

The same article complains that the Volga newspaper almost never carries accounts from rank-and-file communists about how they participate in restructuring. It says that the newspaper's files contained only one letter from a worker on the subject.

The absence of such letters could mean that newspapers choose not to print them. However, it seems more likely that workers and rank-and-file communists see no point in writing letters that bring down criticism upon them and their co-workers.

In January, *Pravda* published a letter attacking such complacency. The writer, V. Yefremova, of a Volgograd metallurgy company, complained that despite the replacement of party leaders, there has been little renewal in the localities. She wrote: "It's like a pine forest during heavy winds: there is noise at the top, but silence on the ground. No restructuring will take place unless we all restructure our consciousness and give up our slipshod working habits, high-and-mighty manners and

[34] "The Danger of Following Old Ruts." *Pravda* 1 Sept. 1986: 3.

demagogy. I mean everybody, from the trust manager to the finisher."[33]

Yefremova found cause for "serious thinking" in the attitude of her fellow finishers, craftsmen who install siding. She wrote that when warm weather came, she and her brigade were assigned to do facework on apartment buildings:

> There are a lot of them in Volgograd, depressing multi-stories made of silicate brick. Faced with tile, the immediately become more attractive and elegant. But here's the rub: few people want to work on the 8th or 12th floor -- it's high, frightening, and the pay is modest. But for me there was no question of whether to do it or not. Of course I should do it -- why even talk about it! That's why we're tilers.[34]

Yefremova writes that she was "thunderstruck" to find that the other women in her brigade refused to do the work.

The year before, Yefremova had gone to the XXVII Party Congress as Volgograd's delegate. At the Congress, she said: "Everyone yearned for discipline, order, honest work and honest interrelations. They were tired of demagogy and loose discipline."

Once back in Volgograd she was amazed, she said, to find that her co-workers were not for greater discipline and harder work. She writes that after making some rousing remarks at a meeting, she noticed "that someone behind me said softly, but loud enough for me to hear: 'Just because she was at the congress she thinks

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[33] "I Fear Idle Talk." *Pravda* 4 Feb. 1987: 2.
[34] Ibid.

everything's going to change at once.'" She reports finding the hostility baffling.

Obviously, many of Yefremova's co-workers consider her meddlesome and a snitch. However, under the protection of *glasnost*, she can take revenge on her co-workers, assailing them in print for their faulty views toward perestroika.

Under *glasnost*, *Pravda* and other national media are not the only forum for party members to criticize their co-workers in the name of perestroika. The regional papers have joined in, too.

Pravda states, for instance, that the regional press are beginning to realize their great role in the struggle against unearned income: "The Rostov Province newspaper *Molot* (Hammer) has been acting appropriately in that respect. It has declared war on money grabbers, bribe-takers and 'moonlighters,' and is using all the means at its disposal to that end."[37]

Pravda praises *Molot* journalists for publishing a lead editorial in which L. Fokina, a milling machine operator in a shoe factory, exposes the co-workers she knows to be pilfering and otherwise enjoying "easy money." *Pravda* also applauds a *Molot* article about state automobile inspectors who "moonlight" in borrowed state vehicles and "shamelessly drive around in their vehicles in search of vodka."

Even factory wall newspapers are being pressured to join in exposing such abuses. One *Pravda* reader wrote: "We all know that the press is the sharpest weapon of the party. Most

[37] "Where is the Income From?" *Pravda* 1 Feb. 1987: 3.

unfortunately, wall newspapers have lost much of this sharpness. . . .And not a word about shortcomings. That is the way it is with our newspaper, *Reinforced Concrete*, at the Number 5 Reinforced Concrete Structure Plant in Kharkov."[38]

The writer says *Reinforced Concrete* should learn from the wall newspaper *For Communism* at a nearby pharmaceutical plant. After an accident at the pharmaceutical plant, the firm's two plumbers went home at quitting time rather than stay late to repair the damage. But by the next morning, everyone at the plant knew what had happened because the workers' correspondents had posted an account of this "unseemly behavior."

The Pravda reader relates, approvingly, that: "The newspaper began to come out more often against those who want to sit safely in the shade during these intense times we live in, and who try to get benefits and special treatment without doing much to earn them."[39]

CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

Suggesting that the problems of *glasnost* -- that it may not go far enough in airing workers' grievances and too far in increasing their accountability -- is not to say that the policy is a failure from workers' perspective. Some recent letters to *Moscow News*, for instance, indicate that workers accept the increased scrutiny and demands of *glasnost* and *perestroika* when these changes are paired with strong incentives.

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[38] "What Wall Newspapers Can Do." *Pravda* 15 Oct. 1986: p.3.
[39] Ibid.

A fitter in a foundry writes: "One thing that I often think about is the laxity of work which grew with time. It is high time to put an end to this. There must be complete and clear material responsibility -- good work, good results must be well rewarded, without fear that a person will get a lot of money, but to punish financially also 'to the hilt' for rejects and other outrages."[40]

However, a molder at the same company despairs that despite the increased scrutiny and pressure to raise production: "I can't imagine how to increase my output more. Everything that could be mechanized was mechanized." The firm's head of research adds bluntly: "The principle of whoever works better lives better is not being fulfilled in our case."[41]

Gorbachev, it seems, is genuinely intent on addressing such complaints and favoring workers' interests against those of party bureaucrats. He told *Moscow News*: "I must say that the people are striving sincerely to take part in all the processes of renewal, and our cadres fail to keep pace with those sentiments of the people."[42]

Gorbachev realizes what is at stake. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* cannot succeed without the willing participation of the masses, an end to the "slow, unproductive work of disinterested millions." Despite Gorbachev's personal

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[40] "Views on Restructuring" *Moscow News* 1-8 Nov. 1987: 2.
[41] Ibid.
[42] "How Society Tackles Renewal: Mikhail Gorbachov in Dialogue with 'MN' Readers" *Moscow News* 1-8 Nov. 1987: 8.

commitment, however, the outlook is not good for quick success under *glasnost* and *perestroika*.

The main problem, discussed above, is opposition from within the party. Nor can this problem be overstated, given the Soviet political elite's tradition of rule by consensus.

An anecdote about Brezhnev suggests how susceptible to overthrow maverick Soviet leaders can be. At the time of the Soviet's 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, Brezhnev told a Czech reformer:

> You thought that because you were in a position of power you could do as you pleased. This was your basic mistake. I also cannot do what I desire. I can actually realize perhaps a third of what I would like to do. If I had not cast my vote in the Politburo in favor of military intervention -- what do you suppose would have happened? Certainly you would not be sitting here. And perhaps even I would not be sitting here either!"[43]

The cause for pessimism about *glasnost* and *perestroika*, then, is that the policies are likely to achieve little if, like Brezhnev, Gorbachev can accomplish only a third of his objectives. The problem is, of course, that much worse for the fact that the Soviet Union lags behind virtually all other communist countries in abandoning its highly centralized "command economy." That is, the prospects for *glasnost* and *perestroika* are dim if the Soviets think, say, that even Hungary's 30-year-old New Economic Mechanism is too daring.

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[43] Jiri Valenta. *Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968: Anatomy of a Decision*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984. p. 144.

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